

### **Beaver County Times** **March 31, 2009**

President Barack Obama signed off Monday on a massive land conservation bill that protects millions of acres of wilderness, but an amendment by U.S. Rep. Jason Altmire, D-4, McCandless Township, also provides some protection for sportsmen.

The law designates more than 2 million acres in nine states as new public wilderness, blocking it from development, and places protections on more than 1,000 miles of rivers in nearly a dozen states. It also creates a new system to protect 27 million acres of land owned by the Bureau of Land Management.

Altmire's amendment, his office said, prevents any new restrictions from being placed on hunting, fishing or trapping on 27 million acres in the West that will be overseen by the newly created National Landscape Conservation System. It also applies to numerous rivers, trails and heritage areas across the United States, including the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor in eastern Pennsylvania.

Altmire's amendment doesn't apply to the more than 2 million acres that were newly designated as public wilderness, a spokeswoman for the congressman said.

Altmire said his amendment "will ensure American sportsmen can continue to use and enjoy millions of acres of public lands (that they already have access to) for decades to come."

Without it, he said, the legislation could have allowed the federal lands to be closed to sportsmen.

While none of the land in the new law is in The Times' coverage area, Tony Rich, president of the Beaver County Sportsmen's Conservation League, applauded Altmire's amendment.

"We're always interested in what's being done with federal land, and we're not used to hearing good news," Rich said.

"As time goes on, it seems there are less and less areas to hunt and more and more laws and rules and regulations. We're losing hunters every year, and not just in Pennsylvania but nationwide. So this sounds like a good thing to me."